Effect of delay in VISA on tourists

3457. DR. E. M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN :
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA :
Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that due to delay in issue of visa by different Indian High Commissions, the tourists to our country are badly affected; and

(b) the time which is taken by Indian High Commission and Embassies in different countries to issue tourists visas and other visas to visit India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR) : (a) No. There has been no delay in issue of tourist viasa.

(b) Tourist and other visas are issued within one to three days, if the applicant applies for the same within the country of his residence or domicile. If the visa is applied for in a country other than the applicant's own country, visa is issued after three working days from the date of application. In cases falling under 'Prior Reference Category', visas are issued only after getting the clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Discussions during the visit of US Secretary of State

3548. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether US Secretary of State visited India in the month of July and had discussed on various issues including pact on nuclear site;

(b) if so, the main points discussed therein;

(c) to what extent India's relations with US has been further strengthened; and

(d) if so, to what extent both sides signed on end use technology and equipment and offering another two nuclear sites to the US?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR) : (a) and (b) The U.S. Secretary of State, Mrs. Hillary Clinton visited India during 17-21 July 2009. She called on Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and Chairperson, UPA and held delegation level talks with External Affairs Minister. EAM and Secretary Clinton reviewed bilateral relations and jointly announced a new agenda for Indo-US bilateral cooperation in (i) science technology, health and innovation; (ii) stretagic cooperation; (iii) energy and climate change; (iv) education and development; and (v) economics, trade and agriculture. The revised dialogue architecture establishes new formulized interaction in the field of health, education, women's empowerment, climate change and strategic issues. The two leaders also discussed regional and global issues of common concern including the challenge of terrorism, nuclear proliferation, climate

change, the global financial crisis and UN reform among other issues. EAM and Secretary Clinton broadly discussed implementation of the 123 Agreement.

(c) Secretary Clinton reiterated that depending of the Indo-US relationship was a priority for the US Government and a personnel priority for her. External Affairs Minister reciprocated the commitment of the US Government to the bilateral relationship and conveyed the importance India attaches to Indo-US strategic partnership.

(d) During the visit, the two sides agreed to a formulation on End Use Monitoring (EUM) to be included in letters of offer and acceptance for acquisition of defence articles and equipment to be acquired by Government of India from the US Goverment. No document on nuclear sites was signed.

SAARC Food Bank

3549. SHRI P.R. RAJAN : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the current status of SAARC food bank initiatitve; and

(b) the details of the initiative?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR) : (a) The current status of the Food Bank initiative is that the Agreement to set up the SAARC Food Bank was signed during the 14th SAARC Summit (3-4 April 2007, New Delhi). India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Maldives have ratified the Agreement. Meetings of the SAARC Food Bank Board in Colombo from 15-16 October, 2008 and 10-11 February 2009 have made the Bank operational and ready to transact business.

(b) The details of the initiative are as follows : With the assessed share of Afghanistan to the Food Bank at 1420 metric tonnes, the total reserves of the Food Bank are 2,43,000 tones. The assessed share of reserves of each SAARC Member State is as follows :-

Sl.No.	Member States	Share (in Metric Tonnes)
1.	Afghanistan	1,420
2.	Bangladesh	40,000
3.	Bhutan	180
4.	India	1,53,200
5.	Maldives	200
6.	Nepal	4,000
7.	Pakistan	40,000
8.	Sri Lanka	4,000
	TOTAL :	2,43,000